

## ANNOUNCEMENT OF FEDERAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**Federal Agency Name:** National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Department of Commerce

**Funding Opportunity Title:** Shellfish Growout Facility Development Grants

**Announcement Type:** Initial Announcement

**Catalogue of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number:** 11.463, Habitat Conservation

**Dates:** Applications must be received by or postmarked by March 18, 2005. Applications received or postmarked after that time will not be considered for funding. No facsimile or electronic mail applications will be accepted.

**Application Submission:** - Electronic submission online: <http://www.grants.gov>  
- Paper submission: New Bedford Harbor Trustee Council, c/o Steve Block, National Marine Fisheries Service, 1 Blackburn Drive, Gloucester, MA 01930, (978) 281-9127.

**Funding Opportunity Description:** On behalf of the New Bedford Harbor Trustee Council (Council), NMFS, serving as the Administrative Trustee to the Council, announces the availability of funds for projects that will construct and operate a shellfish growout facility or facilities that will provide the New Bedford Harbor Regional Shellfish Restoration Committee (RSRC) with quahog (*Mercenaria mercenaria*) seed annually for a minimum of five years to enhance shellfish populations in the New Bedford Harbor environment. Successful grantees shall also be responsible for developing and implementing a monitoring plan, in coordination with the RSRC, to monitor the survival success and growth rates of the growout facility shellfish seed that is planted in the New Bedford Harbor Environment. The shellfish growout facility or facilities must be located in the City of New Bedford or the Towns of Fairhaven or Dartmouth, Massachusetts to facilitate interaction between the growout facility and the RSRC, and to maximize outreach and education opportunities among the communities affected by the New Bedford Harbor PCB contamination. Depending on the level of Federal involvement in these projects, selected recipients will enter into either a cooperative agreement or grant. Total anticipated funding of up to \$500,000 over a five-year period is available under this solicitation.

### FULL ANNOUNCEMENT TEXT

#### **I. Funding Opportunity Description**

##### **A. Program Objectives**

The New Bedford Harbor Trustee Council (Council) is responsible for the restoration of natural resources injured or lost by the release of polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) and other contaminants into the New Bedford Harbor Environment. The Council consists of

representatives of the:

- \* Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs (EOEA);
- \* National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA); and
- \* U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS).

The Council issued a Restoration Plan (Plan) for the New Bedford Harbor Environment in 1997 which established the framework for soliciting and selecting projects to restore, replace or acquire the equivalent of the PCB-injured natural resources. The Plan also identified 11 preferred restoration projects (Round I) for implementation, with funding provided by the Council. In 2000, the Council solicited restoration ideas from the public (Round II) and subsequently selected 17 projects for potential implementation. Two of the Round II restoration ideas addressed the potential for a shellfish upweller or hatchery/nursery program from which quahog (*Mercenaria mercenaria*) and other shellfish could be raised as seed, grown to a large size, and then released to the New Bedford Harbor Environment. The purpose of the grow-out program would be to enhance and/or restore shellfish stocks to restore a sustainable fishery in the New Bedford Harbor Environment.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, through NOAA Fisheries, which serves as the Administrative Trustee for the Council, is issuing this solicitation. This solicitation is to address the Council's desire to construct a grow-out facility or facilities to annually provide shellfish seed to the New Bedford Harbor Regional Shellfish Restoration Committee (RSRC) or to any individual municipality of the RSRC. The RSRC is comprised of the shellfish wardens and administrators of the Towns of Fairhaven and Dartmouth and the City of New Bedford, and scientists from the Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF). The RSRC is tasked with restoring or enhancing shellfish affected by PCB injuries in the New Bedford Harbor Environment. The City of New Bedford serves as the municipal administrator for the RSRC.

## B. Program Priorities

The overall project objective is to develop and operate a facility or facilities to provide healthy, certified disease-free shellfish seed over multiple years for release benefitting the New Bedford Harbor Environment. By constructing and operating a grow-out facility, quahog and other shellfish seed can be grown to enhance the local populations. This solicitation is to develop one or more growout facilities that will operate for at least five (5) years in providing seed for release to the New Bedford Harbor Environment. It is anticipated that each facility will annually grow-out at least three (3) million quahog seed with an average size of at least 10 millimeters at the time of each seed release. To facilitate necessary interaction between the grantee, the growout facility and the RSRC, and to maximize outreach and education opportunities, the growout facility must be located within the communities of Fairhaven, Dartmouth or New Bedford.

It is the intent of the Trustee Council that this facility or facilities will continue to operate and grow shellfish seed for release into New Bedford Harbor Environment waters after these initial funds through this solicitation are expended. While other seed supply activities can be

conducted by the facility receiving funds through this solicitation, the funds through this solicitation shall be dedicated solely to this shellfish seed grow-out project.

It is also the intent of the Trustee Council that the seed grown in the growout facilities funded under this solicitation and released in the New Bedford Harbor Environment be monitored to determine the rates of seed survival and growth over the grant period. The successful grant applicant will provide and implement a detailed plan, developed in consultation with members of the RSRC, to release into the New Bedford Harbor Environment and to monitor the survival and growth rates of the released shellfish seed.

#### C. Program Authority

16 USC 661

## **II. Award Information**

#### A. Funding Availability

This solicitation announces that funding of up to \$500,000 is expected to be made available by the Trustee Council for shellfish growout facility projects in FY 2005. There is no guarantee that sufficient funds will be available to make awards for all proposals. The number of awards to be made as a result of this solicitation will depend on the number of eligible applications received, the amount of funds requested for initiating projects by the applicants, the merit and ranking of the proposals, and the amount of funds made available by the New Bedford Harbor Trustee Council.

The exact amount of funds that may be awarded for any one project will be determined in pre-award negotiations between the applicant(s) and Trustee Council representatives. Publication of this document does not obligate NOAA or the Trustee Council to award any specific project or obligate all or any parts of any available funds.

#### B. Project/Award Period

Awards will be made for projects where requested funding will be used to implement and operate a shellfish growout facility over five years from the approved start date of the project. The earliest date for receipt of awards will be approximately 150-180 days after the close of this solicitation; applicants should consider this selection and processing time in developing requested start dates for proposed restoration activities. Any subsequent proposal to continue work on an existing project must be submitted to the competitive process for consideration and will not receive preferential treatment. Permission to extend the period of performance beyond the 60 month award period is at the total discretion of NOAA and must be requested in writing at least 60 days in advance of an award's expiration date.

#### C. Type of Funding Instrument

Selected applications will be funded through either a cooperative agreement or a grant depending on the level of Federal involvement required. Substantial federal involvement may

include, but is not limited to, activities such as hands-on technical or permitting assistance, support in developing protocols to adequately monitor and evaluate seed survival success, tracking the progression of the project through site visits and progress report evaluation, and involvement in public meetings and events to highlight project activities.

### **III. Eligibility Information**

#### **A. Eligible Applicants**

Eligible applicants are institutions of higher education, hospitals, other non-profits, commercial (for profit) organizations, organizations under the jurisdiction of foreign governments, international organizations, and state, local and Indian tribal governments. Applications from federal agencies or employees of Federal agencies will not be considered. Federal agencies are strongly encouraged to work with states, non-governmental organizations, national service clubs or youth corps organizations and others that are eligible to apply.

The Department of Commerce/National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (DOC/NOAA) is strongly committed to broadening the participation of historically black colleges and universities, Hispanic serving institutions, tribal colleges and universities, and institutions that work in under served areas.

#### **B. Cost Sharing or Matching Requirements**

Cost sharing is not required, although NOAA strongly encourages applicants responding to this solicitation to share as much of the costs of the award as possible. The nature of the contribution (cash versus in-kind) and the amount of matching funds will be taken into consideration in the review process, with cash being the preferred method of contribution.

Match can come from a variety of public and private sources and can include in-kind goods and services and volunteer labor. Federal funds are not considered matching funds. Applicants are also permitted to apply federally negotiated indirect costs in excess of federal share limits as described in Section IV. E. 2. "Indirect Costs".

Applicants whose proposals are selected for funding will be bound by the percentage of cost sharing reflected in the award document signed by the NOAA Grants Officer. Successful applicants should be prepared to carefully document matching contributions, including the names of participating volunteers and the overall number of volunteer or community participation hours devoted to individual shellfish growout facility projects. Letters of commitment for any secured resources expected to be used as match for an award should be submitted as an attachment to the application.

#### **C. Permits and Approvals**

It is the applicant's responsibility to obtain all necessary Federal, state and local government permits and approvals where necessary for the proposed work to be conducted. Applicants are expected to design their proposals so that they minimize the potential for adverse

impacts to the environment. If applicable, documentation of requests or approvals of required environmental permits should be included in the application package. Applications will be reviewed to ensure that they contain sufficient information to allow NOAA staff, on behalf of the Trustee Council, to conduct a NEPA analysis so that appropriate NEPA documentation, required as part of the application package, can be submitted to the NOAA Grants Management Division (GMD) along with the recommendation for funding for selected applications. For more information see Section VI. B. "Administrative and National Environmental Policy Act Requirements".

#### **IV. Application and Submission Information**

##### **A. Address to Request Application Package**

Application information is available at [www.grants.gov/Apply](http://www.grants.gov/Apply). Applicants without internet access can contact Steve Block, New Bedford Harbor Trustee Council, c/o National Marine Fisheries Service, 1 Blackburn Drive, Gloucester, MA 01930-2298, or by phone at 978-281-9127, or e-mail at [steve.block@noaa.gov](mailto:steve.block@noaa.gov).

Any administrative questions should be addressed to Steve Block(see above).

The required forms are as follows:

- 1) Application for Federal Assistance: SF-424 (9/03 version)
- 2) Budget Information, Non-construction Programs: SF-424A
- 3) Assurances, Non-construction Programs: SF-424B
- 4) Certifications Regarding Debarment, Suspension, and other Responsibility Matters: Drug Free Workplace Environment: CD-511
- 5) CD-512 (remains with applicant -do not submit as part of the application package)

Depending on the applicant, the following forms may also be required:

- 1) Disclosure of Lobbying Activities: SF-LLL (if applicable)
- 2) Application for Federal Assistance: CD-346 (required for the following individuals: Non-profit Organizations, Sole Proprietorship, Partnerships, Corporations and Joint Ventures)

If the standard NOAA application forms and instructions for applicants cannot be downloaded, contact Steve Block (see above). Assistance from Council staff is available by telephone or through individual meetings. Assistance will be limited to such issues as the Council's goals, restoration priorities, selection criteria, application procedures, and responding to questions regarding completion of application forms. Assistance will not be provided for conceptualizing, developing or structuring proposals. Information can be obtained at the offices of the Council (see above).

##### **B. Content and Form of Application Submission**

To apply, a complete standard NOAA grant application package should be submitted in accordance with the guidelines in this document. Each application should include:

\* federal application forms specified above;

- \* a project summary that follows the prescribed format, not to exceed two pages;
- \* a narrative project description of no more than 15 pages, including a detailed narrative budget justification;
- \* the curriculum vitae or resume of primary project personnel;
- \* a site location map such as a USGS topographic quadrangle map with site location(s) highlighted;
- \* a letter documenting private landowner or public land manager support; and
- \* other relevant attachments the applicant deems important to the overall understanding and evaluation of the proposed project.

#### C. Summary Information (not to exceed two pages):

- \* Applicant Organization
- \* Project Title
- \* Site Location (nearest town or watershed, and geographic coordinates if known)
- \* Land Owner (name and address if privately owned, resource agency contact if public land)
- \* On-the-Ground Implementation Start Date (not proposed award start date)
- \* Project Scope (Briefly list specific tasks to be accomplished with requested funds, and proposed techniques that will be used to implement and monitor the project)
- \* Growout Facility Production Output (number of shellfish of a certain size expected to be provided to the RSRC for each year of operation)
- \* Project Time Line
- \* Permits (identify permits expected to be necessary for this project and current status of applications or consultations)
- \* Federal Funds Requested & Non-Federal Match Anticipated
- \* Overall Project Cost
- \* Partner and Volunteer Support Anticipated (hours/tasks)
- \* Letters of Support (list those included with the application, particularly those from private landowner/public lands agency resource personnel)

#### D. Narrative Project Description

The narrative project description should closely follow the organization of the evaluation criteria for the application to receive a consistent review against competing applications. The body of the narrative description should be no more than 15 pages long (in 12<sup>A</sup> point font) including a narrative budget justification, and should give a clear presentation of the proposed work.

The narrative project description shall, at a minimum, include the following details:

- \* Type, size and location of proposed facility or facility enhancement. Information on the type of the shellfish seed-raising facility or, if appropriate, the retrofitting of an existing facility proposed; annual seed production capable of or expected from the facility, and information on the ownership and a site description for the grow-out facility.
- \* Authorizations for construction and operation. Do permits and authorizations exist to construct and/or operate the facility? If not, discuss the permits required, if any, for the construction of

this facility and the likelihood of obtaining these permits. NOAA must analyze the potential environmental impacts, as required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), for applicants that are seeking NOAA federal funding. Proposals should provide enough detail for NOAA to make a NEPA determination (see Section VI. B. “Administrative and National Environmental Policy Act Requirements”); funds will not be released to successful applicants until NOAA completes necessary NEPA documentation. In addition to providing specific information that will serve as the basis for any required impact analyses, applicants may also be requested to assist NOAA in drafting of an environmental assessment if NOAA determines an assessment is required. Applicants will also be required to cooperate with NOAA in identifying and implementing feasible measures to reduce or avoid any identified adverse environmental impacts of their proposal. The failure to do so shall be grounds for the denial of an application.

\* Construction, operation and maintenance of the grow-out facility. Provide details about the construction and installation of the facility; expected timeline from the construction of the facility to the first shellfish seed production to seed release; the entity that would run and maintain any facility; provide resumes of the facility operations manager and project leader(s). Discuss any proposed or potential future operation of the facility beyond the five-year term of the award.

\* Expected seed production. The award is expected to fund facility start-up costs associated with the first five years of the facility. Provide information on the number of seed proposed to be raised in the facility and the number and size of quahog seed expected to be provided annually to the RSRC. Applicants should also indicate what other shellfish species could be produced at the facility.

\* Budget. The budget shall be presented in both tabular and narrative format and reflect the costs associated with all phases of this project, including purchasing and installing the shellfish grow-out facility, facility operation and maintenance (including labor costs), quahog seed purchases (if seed are being purchased from commercial hatcheries), and required monitoring, for the first five years of facility operation. Costs should be broken down for each operation and production year. Detail any proposed match (cash or services) to the requested funds per year and quantify these as a percentage of the total funds requested in your proposal. Provide a projected cost per thousand seed raised to the appropriate size by dividing the total award funds requested by the number of seed expected to be provided by the proposed facility to the RSRC or the member municipalities over the five years of the award. Applications will be evaluated for cost-effectiveness by examining the proportion of funds directed to on-the-ground restoration/monitoring activities compared with that to be used for general program support. Budgets must include a detailed breakdown by category of cost (object class) separated into federal and non-federal shares as they relate to specific aspects of the project, with appropriate narrative justification for both the federal and non-federal shares.

\* Outreach. The project narrative should also describe community involvement in the project, such as community participants (project partners) other than the applicant and their contributions, volunteer opportunities, education/outreach/stewardship plans, and efforts to disseminate information on project goals and results and/or the sources of project funding and support.

\* Coordination with the RSRC. Close coordination with the RSRC is critical to arrange the delivery and release of the seed in the New Bedford Harbor Environment and to develop and implement a shellfish seed survival and growth rate monitoring program. The project narrative must include detailed plans, endorsed by the RSRC, detailing the work involved and the entities that will be responsible for such work, including transferring the seed from the growout facility and releasing the seed in the New Bedford Harbor Environment. The project narrative must also provide a shellfish seed survival and growth rate monitoring program, developed in conjunction with the RSRC, that provides details about the study, the entities responsible for conducting the study, and how such a scientific study will be implemented to provide statistically significant results detailing the survival and growth rates of the planted shellfish seed grown in the growout facility.

Inclusion of supplementary materials such as photographs, project designs, diagrams, copies of secured permits, letters of support, et cetera, are strongly encouraged and do not count toward the project narrative page limit.

#### E. Submission Format

Paper applications should not be bound in any manner and should be printed on one side only. Three hard copies (including one original signed in blue ink) of each application are required and must be submitted to the New Bedford Harbor Trustee Council, c/o Steve Block, National Marine Fisheries Service, 1 Blackburn Drive, Gloucester, MA 01930, ATTN: Shellfish Growout Facility Applications. Applicants may opt to submit additional hard copies (seven are needed for reviewing purposes) if it does not cause a financial hardship. An additional copy may also be submitted on a PC-compatible diskette or CD ROM in either Microsoft Word or WordPerfect formats. Different applications from the same organization must be submitted in separate envelopes.

Proposals submitted via [grants.gov/Apply](http://grants.gov/Apply) should follow the format guidelines set out on the [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) Web site.

#### F. Submission Dates and Times

For electronic submission - Proposals must be received by 5:00 Eastern Time on [March 18, 2005. Proposals received after that time will not be considered for funding.

For paper submissions - Applications must be received by or postmarked by 5:00 PM Eastern Time on March 18, 2005. Applications received or postmarked after that time will not be considered for funding. Applications submitted via the U.S. Postal Service must have an official postmark; private metered postmarks are not acceptable. Applications delivered by a delivery service after the postmark date will be accepted for review if the applicant can provide a written guarantee from the delivery service that the document would be delivered on or prior to the specified postmark cut-off. In any event, applications received later than five (5) business days following the closing date will not be accepted. No facsimile or electronic mail applications will be accepted. Applicants desiring acknowledgment of receipt of their applications should include

a self-addressed post card.

## G. Intergovernmental Review

Applications under this program are subject to the provisions of Executive Order 12372, “Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs”. Any applicant submitting an application for funding is required to complete item 16 on SF-424 regarding clearance by the State Single Point of Contact (SPOC) established as a result of EO 12372. To find out about and comply with a State’s process under EO 12372, the names, addresses and phone numbers of participating SPOC’s are listed in the Office of Management and Budget’s home page at: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants/spoc.html>.

## H. Funding Restrictions

### 1. Allowable Costs

Funds awarded cannot necessarily pay for all the costs that the recipient might incur in the course of carrying out the project. Generally, costs that are allowable include salaries, equipment, and supplies, as long as these are “necessary and reasonable” specifically for the purpose of the award. Allowable costs are determined by reference to the OMB Circulars A-122, “Cost Principles for Non-profit Organizations”; A-21, “Cost Principles for Education Institutions”; A-87, “Cost Principles for State, Local and Indian Tribal Governments”; and Federal Acquisition Regulation, codified at 48 Code of Federal Regulations, subpart 31.2 “Contracts with Commercial Organizations”. All cost reimbursement subawards (subgrants, subcontracts, etc.) are subject to those federal cost principles applicable to the particular type of organization concerned.

Pre-award costs are generally unallowable. The earliest date for receipt of awards will be approximately 120 days after the close of this solicitation. Applicants should consider this selection and processing time in developing requested start dates for proposed restoration activities.

### 2. Indirect Costs

The budget may include an amount for indirect costs if the applicant has an established indirect cost rate with the federal government. Indirect costs are essentially overhead costs for basic operational functions (e.g., lights, rent, water, insurance) that are incurred for common or joint objectives and therefore cannot be identified specifically within a particular project. For this solicitation, the federal share of the indirect costs must not exceed the lesser of either the indirect costs the applicant would be entitled to if the negotiated federal indirect cost rate were used or 25 percent of the direct costs proposed. For those situations in which the use of the applicant’s indirect cost rate would result in indirect costs greater than 25 percent of the federal direct costs, the difference may be counted as part of the non-federal share.

A copy of the current, approved negotiated indirect cost agreement with the federal

government should be included with the application. If the applicant does not have a current negotiated rate and plans to seek reimbursement for indirect costs, documentation necessary to establish a rate must be submitted within 90 days of receiving an award.

## **V. Application Review and Selection Information**

### **A. Evaluation Criteria**

Reviewers will assign scores to proposals ranging from 0 to 100 points based on the following five standard NOAA evaluation criteria and respective weights specified below.

#### **1. Importance and Applicability of Proposal (35 points)**

This criterion ascertains the relevance of the proposal to the intention of the Trustee Council to establish a shellfish growout facility and enhance shellfish stocks in the New Bedford Harbor Environment. Proposals will be evaluated on the following:

- \* The potential of the project to meet the shellfish production goals and objectives stated in this solicitation.
- \* The likelihood that the project will deliver tangible, specific results that are measurable, such as number of shellfish released into the New Bedford Harbor Environment and the survival and growth rates of those shellfish.

#### **2. Technical/Scientific Merit (25 points)**

This criterion assesses whether the approach is technically sound and/or innovative, if the methods are appropriate, and whether there are clear project goals and objectives. Proposals will be evaluated based on the following:

- \* The completeness and adequacy of detail in the project description.
- \* The overall technical feasibility of the project from both biological and engineering perspectives, including whether the proposed approach is technically sound and uses appropriate methods that are likely to achieve project goals and objectives.
- \* Whether there are plans for the short- and long-term management of the growout facility,
- \* The details of the arrangements made with the RSRC on shellfish release and monitoring.
- \* The soundness of the plan for the scientific monitoring of the rates of growth and survival of the planted seed that was grown in the growout facility.
- \* Assurance that implementation of the project will meet all federal, state and local environmental laws, and will expeditiously obtain applicable permits so that on-the-ground activities will begin within the first 12 months after a project's proposed start date. Projects that require permits and consultations should list all necessary permits required to complete the project, including the appropriate contact information for each permitting agency and

documentation of all permits already secured for the project. Applications submitted with evidence of completed environmental assessments, completed consultations and/or secured permits, if applicable, are likely to score higher on this criterion.

### 3. Overall Qualifications of Applicants (15 points)

This criterion ascertains whether the applicant possesses the necessary education, experience, training, facilities, and administrative resources to accomplish the project. Proposals will be evaluated based on the following:

- \* The capacity of the applicant and associated project personnel to conduct the scope and scale of the project, as indicated by the qualifications and past experience of the project leaders and/or partners in designing, implementing and effectively managing and overseeing shellfish growout facilities and shellfish monitoring projects. Examples of projects similar in scope and nature that have been successfully completed by the implementation team are encouraged. Communities and/or organizations developing their first shellfish growout facility projects may not be able to document past experience, and therefore will be evaluated on their potential to effectively manage and oversee all project phases, as evidenced by the explanation of characteristics such as education, training and/or experience of primary project participants.

- \* The facilities and/or administrative resources and capabilities available to the applicant to support and successfully manage the shellfish work, including the availability of DMF or other technical expertise to guide the project to a successful completion. Applicants with demonstrated or potential DMF involvement in or support for the proposed project may score higher on this criterion.

### 4. Project Costs (20 points)

This criterion evaluates the budget to determine if it is realistic and commensurate with the project needs and time-frame. Proposals will be evaluated on the following:

- \* Their cost-effectiveness. Reviewers will examine the cost of the project against the number of shellfish seed expected to be produced by the growout facility and released into the New Bedford Harbor environment during the five-year award period and beyond.

- \* Whether the proposed budget is realistic, based on the applicant's stated objectives and time frame, and sufficiently detailed, with appropriate budget breakdown and justification of both federal and non-federal shares by object class as listed on form SF-424A.

### 5. Outreach, Education and Community Involvement (5 points)

This criterion assesses whether the project provides a focused and effective education and/or outreach strategy regarding the Trustee Council's mission. Proposals will be evaluated on the following:

- \* Whether the activities proposed will involve citizens and broaden their participation in coastal habitat restoration and/or science-based monitoring, and lead to achievement of long-term stewardship for restored living marine resources and a heightened community conservation ethic. Community participation may include hands-on training, restoration and/or monitoring activities

undertaken by volunteers or work crews.

- \* Public outreach as it relates to the proposed project, including plans to disseminate information on project goals, results, project partners and their roles, sources of funding and other support provided; and the potential for the proposed project to encourage future shellfish restoration projects or complement other local restoration or conservation activities.

- \* On the depth and breadth of community support, as reflected by the diversity and strength of project partners, and/or written support from state and local governments or members of Congress.

## B. Review and Selection Process

Applications will be screened by Trustee Council staff to determine if they are eligible, complete and in accordance with instructions detailed in the standard NOAA Grants Application Package. Applications that present narrative information in the same order as the evaluation criteria set out above are likely to be more competitive, as reviewers will be more easily able to identify information that directly translates to scoring. Eligible restoration proposals will undergo a technical review, ranking, and selection process.

Applications meeting the requirements of this solicitation will be evaluated by at least three individual technical reviewers consisting of members of the New Bedford Harbor Trustee Council Technical Advisory Committee. All proposals will be individually evaluated, rated and ranked in accordance with criteria and weights described in this solicitation. Reviewer comments, composite project scores and a rank order will be presented to the New Bedford Harbor Trustee Council. The Council, in consultation with its Technical Advisory Committee, will select the proposals to be funded and determine the amount of funds available for each approved proposal. The proposals shall be recommended in rank order unless the proposal is justified to be selected out of rank order based upon one or more of the following factors: (1) the availability of funds; (2) the balance and distribution of funds: a) geographically, b) by type of institution, c) by type of partners, d) by research areas, e) by project types; (3) duplication of other projects funded or considered for funding by NOAA and/or other federal agencies; (4) program priorities and policy factors as set out in sections I.A and B, and section IV.D.; (5) the applicant's prior award performance; (6) partnerships with/participation of targeted groups; and (7) adequacy of information necessary for NOAA staff to make a NEPA determination and draft necessary documentation before recommendations for funding are made to GMD. Hence, awards may not necessarily be made to the highest scoring proposals. Unsuccessful applicants will be notified that their proposal was not among those recommended for funding. Unsuccessful applications submitted in hard copy will be kept on file until the close of the following fiscal year and then destroyed.

Successful applicants generally will be identified approximately 90 days after the close of this solicitation. The earliest date for receipt of awards will be approximately 120 days after the close of this solicitation, when all NOAA/applicant negotiations and NEPA analysis and documentation supporting cooperative agreement activities have been completed. Applicants should consider this selection and processing time in developing requested start dates for

proposed activities.

## **VI. Award Administration Information**

### **A. Award Notices**

Successful applicants may be asked to modify objectives, work plans, or budgets prior to final approval of an award. The exact amount of funds to be awarded, the final scope of activities, the project duration, and specific NOAA cooperative involvement with the activities of each project will be determined in pre-award negotiations among the applicant, the NOAA Grants Office, and the NOAA Restoration Center staff. Projects should not be initiated in expectation of federal funding until a notice of award document is received from the NOAA Grants Office.

### **B. Administrative and National Environmental Policy Act Requirements**

#### **1. Administrative Requirements.**

#### **The Department of Commerce Pre-Award Notification Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements**

The Department of Commerce Pre-Award Notification Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements contained in the Federal Register notice of December 30, 2004 (69 FR 78389) are applicable to this solicitation.

Successful applicants that accept a NOAA award under this solicitation will be bound by Department of Commerce standard terms and conditions. This document will be provided with a copy of the award by the NOAA Grants Office, and can be found at:  
[http://www.osec.doc.gov/oebam/pdf/ST&C\\_rev\\_1002.pdf](http://www.osec.doc.gov/oebam/pdf/ST&C_rev_1002.pdf).

In addition, award documents provided by the NOAA Grants Office may contain special award conditions limiting the use of funds for activities that have outstanding environmental compliance requirements to fulfill, and/or stating other compliance requirements for the award as applicable.

#### **2. NEPA Requirements**

NOAA must analyze the potential environmental impacts, as required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), for applicants that are seeking NOAA federal funding. NOAA will review applications that are likely to be successful candidates for funding consideration for compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act under NOAA Administrative Order (NAO)216-6, Environmental Review Procedures for Implementing The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). NAO 216-6 is located at:  
[http://www.nepa.noaa.gov/NAO216\\_6\\_TOC.pdf](http://www.nepa.noaa.gov/NAO216_6_TOC.pdf). Detailed information on NOAA compliance with NEPA can be found at the following NOAA NEPA website: <http://www.nepa.noaa.gov/> and the Council on Environmental Quality implementation regulations, [http://ceq.eh.doe.gov/nepa/regs/ceq/toc\\_ceq.htm](http://ceq.eh.doe.gov/nepa/regs/ceq/toc_ceq.htm).

Applicants will also be required to cooperate with NOAA in identifying and implementing feasible measures to reduce or avoid any identified adverse environmental impacts of their proposal. The failure to do so shall be grounds for the denial of an application.

### **C. Reporting Requirements**

Progress reports are due semi-annually and cover 6-month periods that begin with the start date listed in award documentation provided by GMD. Progress reports are due no later than 30 days after each 6-month project period. A final report is due no later than 90 days after the expiration date of an award.

Progress reports must be submitted using a specific format for narrative information and a fill-form for project specific details that can be found on the NOAA Restoration Center website at: <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/habitat/restoration>. Use of this required progress report form and format involves collection-of-information requirements subject to the Paperwork Reduction Act, and has been approved by OMB under control number 0648-0472 and expires on April 30, 2006. Complete details on reporting requirements will be provided to successful applicants in the award documentation provided by the NOAA Grants office.

Financial reports cover the periods from October 1 - March 31 (due by April 30) and April 1 - September 30 (due by October 30), and should be submitted directly to the NOAA Grants Management Division as per instructions contained in official NOAA award documentation.

## **VII. Agency Contacts**

For further information contact Steve Block at (978) 281-9127, by fax at (978) 281-9301, or by e-mail at [steve.block@noaa.gov](mailto:steve.block@noaa.gov).